SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY


Chapter 18: The Lost War: Vietnam, 1968-1975


The critical final six years of the Vietnam War have not yet received adequate scholarly attention, so the reader should see (cautiously) Richard M. Nixon, *RN: The Memoirs of Richard Nixon* (Grosset, 1978), and Henry Kissinger, *White House Years* (Little, Brown, 1978), and *Years of Upheaval* (Little, Brown, 1982). See also P. Edward Haley, *Congress and the Fall of Vietnam and Cambodia* (Associated University Presses, 1982).


Hill, 1970), examine the troops' perspective. The Department of the Army has published a series of "Vietnam Studies" written by the senior field commanders that describe a variety of combat and combat-related subjects. The Navy studies to date cover the advisory period to 1959, logistics, and riverine warfare. The Marine Corps historical division has published three volumes on the Marines' role through 1966 as well as a special studies on small-unit actions and the battle for Khe Sanh. For III MAF operations, see also History and Museums Division, HQMC, *The Marines in Vietnam, 1954-1973* (HQMC, 1974), a series of reports written by Brig. Gen. E. H. Simmons, USMC (Ret.), supplemented by a bibliography and other topical essays, as well as Lewis W. Walt, *Strange War, Strange Strategy* (Funk & Wagnalls, 1970). In addition, the Coast Guard has published a study of its Vietnam Service.


For accounts of some of the war's most dramatic events, see Eugene G. Windchy, *Tonkin Gulf* (Doubleday, 1971); Seymour Hersh, *My Lai 4* (Random House, 1970); Don Oberdorfer, *TET!* (Doubleday, 1971); Peter Braestrup, *Big Story: How the American Press and Television Reported and Interpreted the Crisis of Tet 1968 in Vietnam and Washington* (2 vols., Westview,


1972); and The Staff of *Congressional Quarterly, The Power of the Pentagon* (Congressional Quarterly Inc., 1972).


The history of the war has become quite controversial, with the foremost division being between “orthodox” and “revisionist” scholars. To varying degrees orthodox historians and believe the war was misguided from the start, that South Vietnam was never vital to American security, and that the U.S. lost the war in Southeast Asia. On the other hand, revisionists consider the war a noble cause to contain Communism. They also assert that after 1969-1971 U.S. had actually defeated the Communists, but self-inflicted wounds from antiwar journalists and protesters and spineless politicians on the home front snatched defeat from the jaws of victory. A discussion of some of the key disputes can be found in Gary R. Hess, *Vietnam: Explaining America’s Lost War* (Blackwell, 2009) and Andrew Wiest and Michael J. Doidge,


The Secretaries of Defense who served during Vietnam dealt with many problems in addition to the war, such as the 1965 intervention in the Dominican Republic, the elusive goal of arms control, whether or not to build an ABM system, readjusting NATO to changing circumstances, and a series of crises in the Middle East. See Lawrence S. Kaplan, Ronald D. Landa, and Edward J. Drea, History of the Office of the Secretary of Defense, Vol. V: The McNamara Ascendency (Historical Office, Office of the Secretary of Defense, 2006) and Edward J. Drea, Secretaries of Defense Historical Series, Vol. VI, McNamara, Clifford, and the Burdens of Vietnam, 1965-1969 (Historical Office, Office of the Secretary of Defense, 2011).

An important aspect of the war was the civil-military conflict that prevailed at the highest levels; see Robert Buzzanco, Masters of War: Military Dissent and Politics in the Vietnam Era (Cambridge University Press, 1996) and H. R. McMasters, Dereliction of Duty: Lyndon Johnson, Robert McNamara, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Lies That Led to Vietnam (HarperCollins, 1997).

The understanding of U.S. counterinsurgency efforts has benefited from several studies, including Andrew J. Birtle, U.S. Army Counterinsurgency and Contingency Operations Doctrine, 1942-1976 (Center of Military History, 2006) and Thomas L. Ahern, Jr., Vietnam


For the wartime experience at the individual level, see James R. Ebert, A Life in a Year: The American Infantryman in Vietnam, 1965-1972 (Presidio Press, 1993); Kyle Longley, Grunts: The American Combat Soldier in Vietnam (M. E. Sharpe, 2008); and Peter Maslowski and Don Winslow Looking for a Hero: Staff Sergeant Joe Ronnie Hooper and the Vietnam War (University of Nebraska Press, 2004). The latter book wraps a history of the war around the life of the man who was often acclaimed as Vietnam’s most highly decorated soldier; some of the material used in these two Vietnam chapters comes from this book. Although relatively brief, James E. Westheider’s The African American Experience in Vietnam: Brothers in Arms (Rowman & Littlefield, 2007) is based on the most recent research. A majority of servicemen were either draftees or draft-inspired volunteers, so George Q. Flynn’s The Draft, 1940-1973 (University Press of Kansas, 1993) is an important monograph. The vast majority of those who served in Vietnam did not engage in combat, and Meredith H. Lair, Armed with Abundance: Consumerism and Soldiering in the Vietnam War (University of North Carolina Press, 2011) provides a fascinating glimpse of their war.

In all their varied aspects, the air and naval wars continue to be the subject of excellent scholarly works. For the air war, see Bernard C. Nalty, Air War over South Vietnam, 1968-1975

The least understood military forces that participated in the war were those of South Vietnam. Several books shed light on the Army of the Republic of South Vietnam (ARVN); see Robert K. Brigham, *ARVN: Life and Death in the South Vietnamese Army* (University Press of Kansas, 2006); Andrew Wiest, *Vietnam’s Forgotten Army: Heroism and Betrayal in the ARVN* (2nd ed., New York University Press, 2007); and Lewis Sorley, ed., *The Vietnam War: An Assessment by South Vietnamese Generals* (Texas Tech University Press, 2010). One of the least known aspects of the war was the effort to infiltrate South Vietnamese commandos into North Vietnam; Kenneth Conboy and Dale Andrade, *Spies and Commandos: How America Lost the Secret War in North Vietnam* (University Press of Kansas, 2000) explain how all the commandos were killed or captured, and how some of the latter became double agents working for North Vietnam.

For an accounts of the war from the enemy’s perspective, see William J. Duiker, *Sacred War: Nationalism and Revolution in a Divided Vietnam* (McGraw-Hill, 1994) and The Military History Institute of Vietnam, translated by Merle E. Pribbenow, *Victory in Vietnam: The*


The media, often a target of the revisionists, has benefitted from a number of studies that show it reported the war quite accurately, though it did present a negatively biased portrayal of the antiwar movement. Among the best studies are William Prochnau, *Once Upon a Distant War: Young War Correspondents and the Early Vietnam Battles* (Times Books, 1995); William M. Hammond, *The United States Army in Vietnam: Public Affairs: The Military and the Media, 1968-1973* (Center of Military History, 1996); William M. Hammond, *Reporting Vietnam: